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264 "When we work in the fields we eat five times daily: as soon as we reach the place we have a light lunch *(zakuska)*, at nine we have the *ruchok*, at one dinner, at five another *zakuska*, and in the evening after finishing work we have supper. We older people don't eat between meals but let the children do so if they are hungry."

262 252 From time to time during my stay in the village I tried to teach the tavern cook some simple and uncomplicated western dish to vary the biting peasant food. She tried faithfully but unsuccessfully to comply. After one such hopeless but courteous attempt she read me a little lesson in village menus:

"We Dragalevtsy people are pretty conservative in everything and have added no new dishes to our menu. The western combinations which people eat in Sofia are tasteless and slimy. If one doesn't use lots of salt, hot pepper, and vinegar, then the food has no taste at all."

273 Beverages other than milk and wine made little appeal. Wine was much in evidence on holidays or when there were guests. An average village home would use from 250 to 300 quarts of wine a year. Most of the *rakiya* was drunk either at the taverns or on festive occasions. In commenting on the liquor consumption of the village one man said:

"We are not such fools as not to drink wine, for the wine is transformed into blood and gives strength to man."

000 Someone has said that a house does not become a home until it knows a birth, a wedding, and a death. In other words, it is more than plaster walls, crude furniture, and steaming food. It is even more an association of memories deeply rooted in family crises.

●844 [591] A frequently recurring crisis in Dragalevtsy was childbirth, which always took place in a home, never in a hospital. Usually it was the home in which the couple lived, for only rarely did the wife return to her paternal home for the event. When a woman learned that she was pregnant, she told the fact only to her own mother and to her husband, embarrassment preventing further disclosure. The mother-in-law learned about it a month later, for in the words of one of the older village men:

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562 The woman is born to be a mother. She knows it and, as her duty, should not expect anything from the others."

843 Before the birth of the child, swaddling clothes were prepared, and a cradle and wooden tub were bought. The mother herself was not supposed to sew because it was believed that this would make the baby dumb. In fact, nobody went to any trouble at all to provide an elaborate layette, for that would really seem to the peasants like tempting fate. One of the men asked me, "Who can tell whether it will be a boy or a girl, and most important, who has unnecessary money to throw away in vain, for the baby may die?"

● 844 At the delivery of the baby, all the young people were sent away, and only the old people and the midwife remained with the mother. "The business of the relatives is to give courage to the mother, and in case the delivery of the child is painful, the midwife massages and carefully pulls the baby out."

The peasants much preferred the midwife or *baba,* to whose old-fashioned ways they were accustomed. To be sure, they called in the village doctor if the case seemed very complicated or if the woman fainted in labor. Dr. Chirkova has encountered many interesting superstitions and folkways in her village experience; these she included in her annual reports to the District Health Office. For instance, since the baby is supposed to be born on straw, in conformity with the birth of Christ, some deliveries occurred in mangers where the doctor was quite apt to find the baby blue with cold. There were instances of women who kept the pains secret from everyone, especially the husband, for they did not "want to add to his troubles." Some of these women even went so far as to remain alone during the childbirth, cutting the cord with a sickle and tying it with their own hair. Such instances, however, were exceptional.

Many deliveries were made with the woman standing, but when labor seemed to be difficult those in attendance put a rope beneath her breasts, tied it to the ceiling, and swung her "in order that the baby might be born more easily." To lessen the ordeal still more, the *baba* moistened the lips of the woman with an herb called "The Hands of the Holy Virgin," which had been put into a bowl of water. It is assumed that the Virgin will render direct aid.

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Should the baby appear to be in the wrong position for delivery those attending put the mother in a rug and swung her until the baby came into the "right" position. Normally coffee or wax was used on the navel "so it will stay there one week without falling." Furthermore, the mother was supposed to drink some of the water in which the baby was washed and to which a clove of garlic had been added "in order that the mother's milk may come sooner."

"After the baby has arrived the children are told that the stork has brought a little brother or sister to them through the chimney and they are very glad about it," was the way a proud young father phrased the matter in the course of our conversation about the arrival of his son.

The taboos of childbirth did not cease with the birth of the child. Since the woman was considered unclean for forty days she had to remain at home and was not allowed to attend the christening of her own child. At the end of this period she went to the church for a special purification ceremony at the hands of the priest.

If the child had a birthmark, many peasants assumed that the mother had stolen some object which touched her own body where the birthmark appeared on the child. Any serious abnormality in an infant was explained by the *babi* on the grounds of too close kinship of the parents to each other or the occurrence of conception on Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday night, each of which is supposed to be kept free of intercourse because Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday are holy days. As one would expect, the latter taboo is of little importance nowadays; it is simply recalled as a convenient way of explaining something out of the ordinary.

Some of the more ignorant peasants rubbed the head of a very sick infant with urine or, if the baby was born with a "closed nose," a cure was "effected" by putting a small fresh fish tailfirst up the nose. Afterwards the fish was put under a stone.

To keep the mother from fainting during her convalescence the family surrounded her with incense smoke and burning feathers both morning and evening, and gave her holy water to wash the baby's face and her face. Should some member of the family have returned after dark he could not enter the room where the mother was lying. She

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APPENDIX VII

THE FOLK APPROACH IN EXTENSION WORK

A BULGARIAN EXPERIENCE*

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THE INCIDENT. One day in Dragalevtsy, a Bulgarian village of 1,600 people, the mayor's courier went from house to house to inform all expectant mothers of a meeting to be held in the schoolhouse the next afternoon. The public health nurse from Sofia wanted to tell them about prenatal and postnatal care. Attendance, according to the courier, was compulsory. As he made his rounds, comments such as these flowed in his wake: "What does that mayor think he's doing? Making a public spectacle of pregnant women!" "I've already had more babies than that nurse will ever have. She can't tell me anything I don't know." By nightfall the women of the village, after discussing it over the stone fences between the yards, had decided that the expectant mothers should not attend the meeting.

The next afternoon two or three women did appear, women whose families felt under obligation to the mayor and consequently supported all of his programs. The mayor and the nurse were much disappointed, but dared not invoke the compulsory part of the courier's invitation. The nurse went ahead with her demonstration for the faithful few, but even these left the meeting much bewildered and quite disappointed. They told their friends, "We couldn't buy all the stuff she told us to buy, even if we should want to do everything she suggested."

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THE PROBLEM. Incidents similar to this occurred so frequently during my three-year study of that village that I tried to discover what more effective approach could be used to bridge the gap between the scientific and the folk knowledge. The mayor and those assisting him were well-intentioned, but the people never seemed to apply the suggestions that the outside lecturers made. Accordingly, the lecturers became more convinced that the peasants were stupid, and the peasants became more self-satisfied with the ways that they already had. What was supposed to be *extension of the new* really became *extinction of the new* before it had time to take root.

The "uplifters," who frequently used the phrase *izdigane na seloto* or "the raising up of the village," were unnecessarily complicating their task.

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on which they operate. Demonstrations then should be worked out not so much to illustrate the ideal but to show how present practices can be improved with the utensils already at hand. If this is done the village women no longer could say, "Oh, I can't do that, for I don't have all those things the stranger had."

4. *Local leadership would be recognized and used.* A great mistake, too often made, is the assumption that the mayor[1], an outside governmental appointee, is the leader of the village in all respects. Every activity has its own local leaders. By skillful questioning the outsider can learn which women are most respected in their particular neighborhoods. Each of these could be asked to call a *sedenka* together for her neighborhood at a time convenient both to the specialist and the women. Before they sponsored any such novelty the leaders must be convinced of the worthwhile nature of the activity; and can then be taught to assume an important part in the demonstration.

5. *The new proposals could be fitted more easily into the fabric of everyday life.* Not only must the women be given the techniques but they must be given an ideology to accompany those techniques. They must have an answer ready for the doubting husband, the curious neighbor, the pooh-poohing mother-in-law. They must see that what they are asked to do bolsters up rather than tears down those social values which they consider essential to their way of life.

To illustrate, we may return again to the matter of postnatal care. Expectant mothers in Dragalevtsy hesitate to prepare layettes for the infants in advance. They feel that such behavior, presuming as it does that the baby will survive, would anger the powers that be; women must expect the worst because the worst so frequently occurs. This is a fundamental fact to be reckoned with in the teaching of infant care. Most public health nurses recognize this difficulty, but many try to eradicate it by telling the women how superstitious and how silly they are. The more positive approach would recognize the limitations and try to do at least these two things:

a. Insist that clean cloths, soap, and all other available equipment needed at childbirth and in early infancy be prepared and set aside in advance. None of these cloths should require sewing, since all pregnant women are forbidden to sew.

b. Tell the mothers-to-be how they can make simple, hygienic garments as soon as they recover sufficiently from the delivery, for there is no *tabu* against such action then. Once they understand how to make and use such special garments in place of the unsanitary swaddling clothes, some of them

[1] The national government which came into power in May, 1934, sent engineers and lawyers and other educated people into key villages as mayors to supplant the local peasants, who had been elected by their fellow villagers.